

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 6, 2006

Congressman John Spratt
Ranking Democrat, House Budget Committee
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Spratt:

We are writing to express our continued support for the Indian Health Service's (IHS) Urban Indian Health Program (UIHP) and to ask for your help in preserving funding for this important program as you craft the Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Resolution.

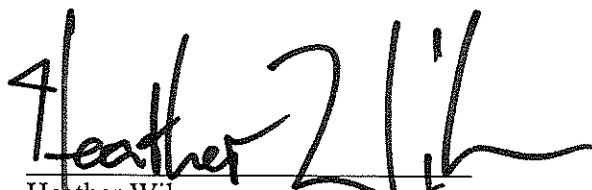
As you know, President Bush proposed elimination of the UIHP in his FY07 Budget. The Administration suggests that those currently served by urban Indian health centers can instead be served by community health centers, which received a \$181 million increase in funding in the budget. While we support the increase in community health center funding, the majority of new dollars are dedicated to services in new centers. We are concerned that existing community health centers, which the Administration assumes can absorb those who have been using urban Indian centers, will not have the resources to offset the elimination of the UIHP. Community health centers are already overburdened in most urban areas and were subjected to a cut in their base grants in 2006 along with no increase to their base grants proposed for 2007. The National Association of Community Health Centers underscored these concerns in a February 10th letter to President Bush noting that Urban Indian Health Organizations (UIHOs) and Community Health Centers (CHCs) "currently serve a complementary role in the provision of primary care services to underserved communities" and UIHOs "provide certain unique services not available at the typical community health center and the two entities often serve different populations in different communities."

The 34 urban Indian health programs are established, trusted, and well-known, offering professionals who are uniquely trained to provide primary care and outreach services in a culturally-knowledgeable manner to 150,000 underserved urban Indians annually. Of the 2.4 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in the U.S., 1.3 million live in urban areas and about 1 million live outside the IHS service area. It is unlikely that community health centers will be able to match the service and cultural expertise that urban Indian centers have been providing, and we are worried that these urban Indians living off-reservation may be deprived of appropriate care.

We believe the President's FY07 budget proposal to eliminate the UIHP would have detrimental effects on urban Indian communities across the country and we urge you to increase the Function 550 Health account by at least \$33 million over the President's request to maintain this program. Thank you for your consideration.


Sincerely,

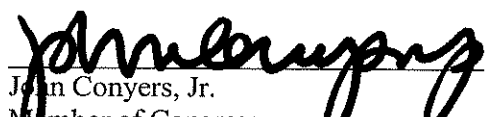

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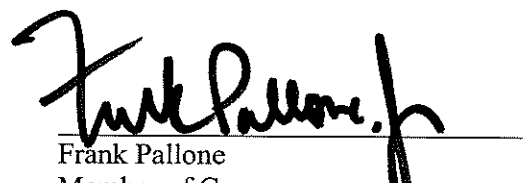

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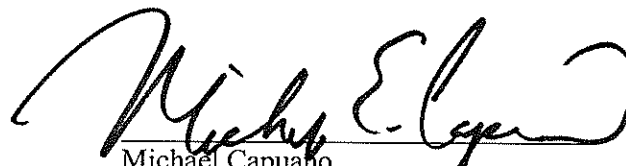

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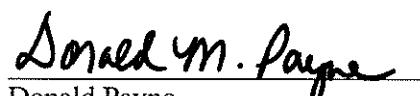

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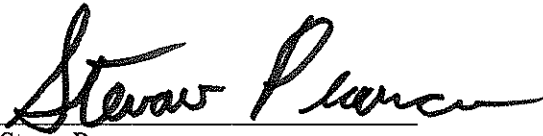

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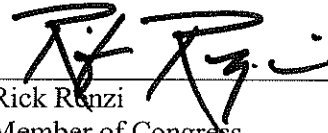

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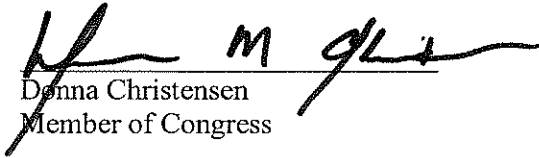

Mark Udall
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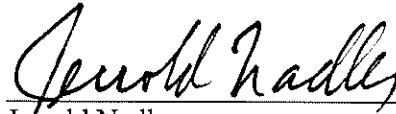
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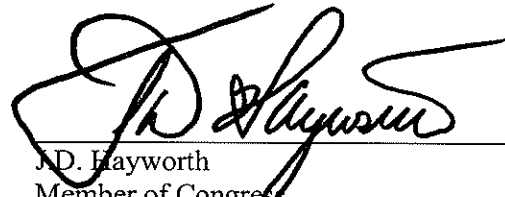
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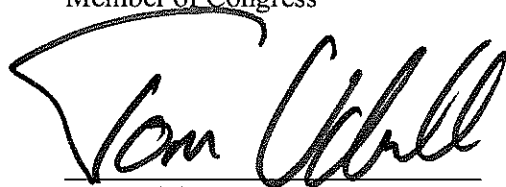
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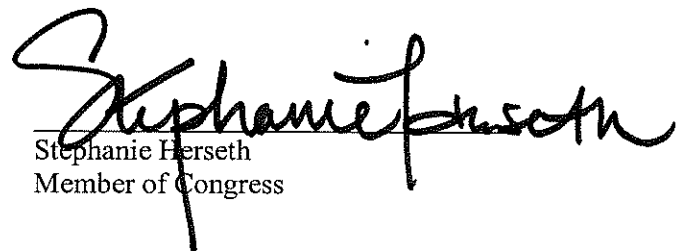
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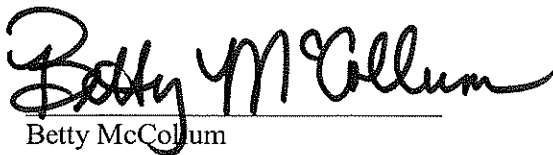
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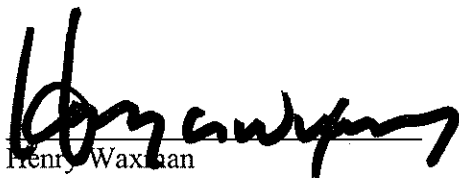
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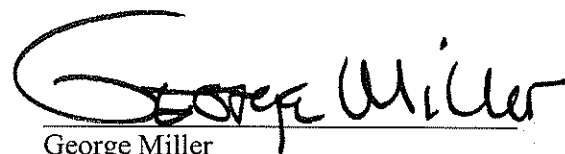
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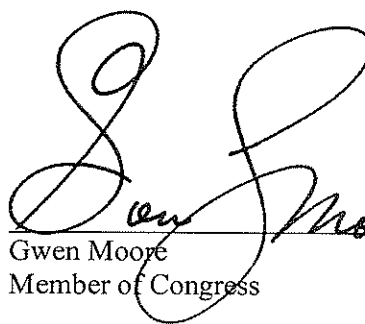
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